

**ANALYSIS OF STRUCTURAL VIOLENCE AND SOCIAL  
IGNORANCE IN *GRAVE OF THE FIREFLIES* ANIMATED  
FILM SCRIPT**

**A THESIS**

**BY**

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**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LITERATURE  
UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM  
FACULTY OF LITERATURE  
UNIVERSITAS ISLAM SUMATERA UTARA  
MEDAN  
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**THE FACULTY OF LITERATURE**

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Melani Rianti

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## APPENDICES

### Biography of the Director

Isao Takahata was one of the most influential figures in the development of the Japanese animation industry. He was known as a director, screenwriter, and producer of animated films who made a significant contribution to the world of Japanese animated films. Takahata was born in Ujijamada, Mie Prefecture, Japan, on October 29, 1935, and passed away in Tokyo on April 5, 2018. He completed his studies at the University of Tokyo with a major in French Literature, an academic background that later shaped his distinctive directing style, which was oriented toward humanism and philosophy.

His career in animation began in 1959 when he joined Toei Animation, a leading animation studio in Japan. It was here that he began collaborating with Hayao Miyazaki, who later became his collaborative partner in founding Studio Ghibli in 1985. Together with Miyazaki, Takahata produced various animated works that were not only entertaining but also rich in humanistic, social, and cultural values.

One of his most famous and internationally acclaimed works is *Grave of the Fireflies* (1988), an animated film that tells the tragic story of children who were victims of World War II. The film was praised for its realistic and emotional approach and is considered one of the most touching animated works of all time. Unlike Miyazaki's signature fantasy-style visuals, Takahata emphasized narrative realism, visual simplicity, and emotional depth in addressing social and humanitarian issues. Overall, Isao Takahata is remembered as a film director who brought a unique

touch to the world of animation through his deep, reflective, and touching cinematic approach to various social realities and humanitarian values.

### **His Literary Works**

- **Films**

1. Horus: Prince of the Sun (Taiyō no Ōji: Horusu no Daibōken) (1968)
2. Panda! Go, Panda! (1972)
3. Panda! Go, Panda! The Rainy-Day Circus (1973)
4. Jarinko Chie (Chie the Brat) (1981)
5. Gauche the Cellist (1982)
6. Grave of the Fireflies (Hotaru no Haka) (1988)
7. Only Yesterday (Omoide Poroporo) (1991)
8. Pom Poko (1994)
9. My Neighbors the Yamadas (Hōhokeyo Tonari no Yamada-kun) (1999)
10. The Tale of the Princess Kaguya (Kaguya-hime no Monogatari) (2013)

### **Summary of the Film**

*Grave of the Fireflies* is a Japanese animated film released in 1988, directed by Isao Takahata and produced by Studio Ghibli. The film is an adaptation of Akiyuki Nosaka's semi-autobiographical work, first published in 1967 under the same title. The narrative centers on the struggle for survival of two siblings, Seita and his younger sister Setsuko, as they face the dire circumstances caused by World War II, particularly after the Allied forces bombed the city of Kobe.

The story begins with Seita's death and then moves backward through a series of flashbacks that reconstruct his experiences with Setsuko after the loss of their mother in an air raid. After temporarily staying with relatives, they choose to live independently in a shelter because they are treated inhumanely. Over time, their condition worsens due to starvation, social isolation, and a lack of support from the community around them.

With a realistic and emotional visual approach, the film conveys the destructive impact of war, especially on children who are indirect victims. Seita and Setsuko's journey illustrates the collapse of social structures and highlights society's indifference to the suffering of others. The tragic ending, with Setsuko's death from malnutrition and loneliness, reinforces the film's central message about human vulnerability in conflict situations and the failure of social systems to fulfill their protective functions. Therefore, *Grave of the Fireflies* not only presents a dramatic story about the impact of war but also serves as a critique of the process of dehumanization, structural violence, and the absence of social empathy in the context of a humanitarian crisis.

## **Characters of the Film**

### **1. Seita**

Seita is the main protagonist in the film *Grave of the Fireflies*, portrayed as a 14-year-old boy who must take on the role of head of the family after his mother dies in an air raid. Seita's character reflects a responsible, loving figure who tries hard to protect his younger sister, Setsuko, from the suffering caused by war. However, Seita also shows a vulnerable emotional side, especially when faced with the increasing

pressures of life. His character's journey depicts a sudden process of maturation due to the collapse of the family and social systems. Seita's decision to leave his aunt's house reflects the dilemma between maintaining his dignity and the need to survive in the midst of a crisis.

## **2. Setsuko**

Setsuko is Seita's younger sister, around four years old, and symbolizes the innocence and helplessness of children in wartime conditions. She is portrayed as a cheerful, loving child who is deeply dependent on her brother's affection. However, as the situation worsens, her physical and mental condition deteriorates due to starvation and trauma. Setsuko's death is the emotional climax of the film, showing the destructive impact of war on children's lives. In the context of structural violence analysis, Setsuko's character can be interpreted as a representation of victims who suffer due to a social system that fails to provide protection.

## **3. Seita and Setsuko's Mother**

The mother's character in the film only appears at the beginning of the story, but her presence leaves a deep emotional impact. She dies from serious injuries sustained in an air raid on the city of Kobe. This character symbolizes the suffering of civilian women in wartime, who not only experience physical loss but also become the catalyst for a series of sufferings later experienced by their children. Seita and Setsuko's mother represents the vulnerability of civilians in armed conflict, particularly women as victims of structural violence.

## **4. Seita and Setsuko's Aunt**

Seita's aunt plays the role of a relative who takes them in after they lose their home. At first, she shows a helpful attitude, but gradually becomes cold and shows

disapproval of Seita and Setsuko's presence. She criticizes Seita for not contributing to the household needs, especially in a situation of food shortage. This aunt's character reflects a form of social indifference within the family, where empathy is replaced by pragmatic demands. In the context of structural violence, the aunt's treatment of Seita shows how values of solidarity can erode under crisis conditions, and how economic pressure can give rise to discriminatory attitudes toward fellow family members.

### **5. Seita and Setsuko's Father**

Seita and Setsuko's father does not appear directly in the film because he is serving as a member of the Imperial Japanese Navy. His existence is only mentioned through verbal narration and letters that never arrive. The physical and emotional absence of the father figure emphasizes the loss of protection and family leadership during wartime. This absence also reflects the weakness of the state's protection system for civilians, especially for children left without parental support in emergency situations.

### **The Script of Film**

() = scenery notes

[ ] = translational/cultural notes Within translational notes:

LT Literal translation of Japanese;

ET Equivalent translation;

ALT Alternative phrasing of previous sentence or word;

= Definition or clarification of a word;

? Uncertain translation due to unclear dialogue.

< > = hidden reference of a dialogue.

R/SEITA: In 1945, on the night of September 21, I died. [ALT: On the night of September 21, 1945, I died. NOTE: Sho^wa year 20 = 1945] (\_Train station\_)

VOICES: What a dirty guy. Oi! Watch out! How dirty! I wonder if he's dead. The American troops will be arriving soon. It would be an embarrassment if they find such a guy here at the station.

VOICE: Mommy! SEITA What date is it? (He slumps down.) Setsuko... (Station workers arrive for clean-up.)

WORKER 1: (prods Seita's body) Again... (Searches Seita) Hm? What's this?

WORKER 2: Let it be, let it be. [ALT: Forget it, forget it.] just throw it away.

WORKER 1: (prods another body) This one's gonna go soon, too. When they start staring into open air, they're goners.

(The station worker throws the rusted candy can outside. The cap opens on impact and small white objects spill out. As the fireflies take flight, the rei of Setsuko rises up from the weed beds. Seeing her brother's form in the station, she starts to go there, but a hand restrains her. She looks up to see the rei of her older brother. Seita picks up the candy can and the can is no longer rusted. Handing the can to Setsuko, they head into the station together.)

Title: Hotaru no Haka (The Grave of the Fireflies)

(Riding on the train, light washes over the reis of Seita and Setsuko. As they turn around, they see the fires of an air raid...)

(Seita is putting food items into the hole he dug as the air raid sirens sound. His mother is trying to put a protective cap on Setsuko.)

VOICE: Take shelter! Take shelter! Please take shelter!

VOICES: [?][?] If it's a bombing raid then the shelter-hole behind the fire house is the safest. [?]

SETUSKO: It's hot!

MOTHER: You're a good girl, aren't you? You must bear it. [ALT: You must endure it.] (Setsuko squirms away.) Well, I'll be going to the air-raid shelter. You two be careful and join me soon. Sett-chan [in reference to Setsuko], you listen to your brother.

SEITA: Mom, never mind. You gotta go quickly!

MOTHER: Yes, yes.

SEITA: Mom, do you have the medicines with you?

MOTHER: Yes, yes. I have them.

SETSUKO: I don't like the air-raid shelter...

SEITA: Saying such a silly thing... [ALT (poor): What a silly thing to say.] You could be blown up by the bombs. [ALT: Don't blame me if you get blown up by a bomb.] Hurry and get on!

SETSUKO: The dolly! [ALT: My dolly!]

SEITA: Where? Ah!

(They hear the warning bells. With a whooshing sound, the air raid begins.)

SETSUKO: Nii-chan! [LT: Elder brother; ET: Brother]

SEITA: Take cover! (They try to flee outside. As the fire bomb proceeds,) No!

(They rush back into the house to avoid the fire, then return outside.)

SETSUKO: (As they prepare to leave, fire bursts from windows.) Nii-chan! Nii-chan! Nii-chan!!

(The two manage to get away to a grove by the sea; various scenes follow.)

MAN: Emperor [ALT: Lord Emperor], Ban-zai!! [ALT: Long live the Lord Emperor!!]

(The raid passes.)

SEITA: No need to worry. We should be safe here.

SETSUKO: Where did Mommy go?

SEITA: She's at the air-raid shelter. The shelter behind the fire station. She said it could withstand the direct hit of a 250 kilo bomb. There's no need to worry. Mom's probably at the Nihon Matsu Station. We arranged to meet there. Let's go there after we rest a while.

(Seita starts to wipe Setsuko's face.)

SEITA: Are you all right?

SETSUKO: I lost my sandal.

SEITA: I'll buy you a new one, a much better one.

SETSUKO: I have money too! Open this. (She upends the purse to show the toys.)

SEITA: My, you're rich.

(Rain starts to fall.)

SEITA: So this is what they say falls after air-raids...

(Seita, carrying Setsuko on his back, climbs up to a road.)

SEITA: My, it's become really...cleared... Look, that's Kohkaido. We went there to eat zo-sui, remember? [zo-sui = soup-like rice dish]

SETSUKO: Did our home burn down?

SEITA: Looks that way.  
SETSUKO: What will we do?  
SEITA: Dad will take revenge for us.

( \_The Aftermath\_ )

VOICES: Mom! Mom! [ALT: Mother! Mother!]  
MAN: If your house was the only one that didn't burn, I guess you'd feel uncomfortable. I'm glad that ours just burned, clean and simple.  
MAN: It's really a good thing that you're all right.  
WOMAN: [?]  
MAN: No, it's not Aunty.  
SETSUKO: Nii-chan, I need to go!  
SEITA: Okay.  
MAN: Everyone! Please gather at the school! [LT: People's School, Citizen's School]  
SEITA: What's the matter?  
SETSUKO: My eyes hurt.  
SEITA: You mustn't rub them. They'll be able to wash them at the school.  
SETSUKO: Where's Mom?  
SEITA: She's at the school.  
SETSUKO: School?  
SEITA: Yeah. Let's hurry over there.  
SETSUKO: Okay.

(At the school, a make-shift hospital has been set up.)

WOMAN: Seita-san. (takes him aside) Seita-san, have you seen your mother? She's hurt. Hurry, go see her. I'll watch her (in reference to Setsuko). (To Setsuko:) It was scary, wasn't it, Sett-chan. You didn't cry ?  
SETSUKO: No.  
WOMAN: Your brother has some business. It won't be so long.

(Seita rushes down to the main hospital complex.)

MAN: Ah, Seita-kun. We were looking for you. Are you all right?  
SEITA: My mom?  
MAN: This way. (As he leads Seita out, he turns back and hands Seita a ring.) Oh... This is your mother's.  
SEITA: What?  
MAN: Over here.

(Seita is shown into a room where his mother lies wrapped in bandages. Her breathing is labored.)

MAN: She's finally gone to sleep. It would be better if she was placed in a hospital. I'm having people ask around. I heard that Kaisei hospital in Nishinomiya didn't burn.

SEITA: Ahm... Mom has a bad heart. [ALT: heart trouble] Is there any way could you get her the medicine for that? MAN I'll ask around. Well, I'll come again.

SEITA: Mom...

(Seita comes back to the school playground where the woman and Setsuko is playing in the sand box.)

WOMAN: Did you see her?

SEITA: Yes...

WOMAN: It's really a pity.

SETSUKO: I'm thirsty. (Seita hands Setsuko his water bottle.)

WOMAN: If there's anything I can do, tell me. Oh, yes. Did you get the dried rations? I'll get them for you.

SEITA: Put this ring in your purse. You mustn't lose it. Mom's not feeling great. She'll get well soon, though.

SETSUKO: Where is she?

SEITA: In the hospital. The one in Nishinomiya. So we're going to stay over at the school tonight. And tomorrow... You remember our Nishinomiya aunty, the one who lives near the pond? Let's go there. Okay?

WOMAN: We're at the second floor of the school. Everyone's there; won't you join us?

SEITA: Thank you. We'll be there later.

WOMAN: Later, then. Sett-chan.

SEITA: Do you want to eat them?

SETSUKO: I want to go to Mommy.

SEITA: Tomorrow. It's too late today.

(Setsuko starts to cry. After a while...)

SETSUKO: Look! Nii-chan's [ALT: Brother's, I'm] good at this.

(Another day. The body of Seita and Setsuko's mother is being carried out for cremation.)

MAN1: We can't take off the bandage. It's better not to look at the body.

MAN2: With this heat...

MAN1: We have to use trucks starting today.

MAN3: Your sister... What did you do with her?

SEITA: I left her with our distant relative in Nishinomiya. We had arrangements for us to stay there in case we got burned out.

MAN3: Is that so? That's good. Well, I have duties, so I'll leave you here. Take care.  
[LT: Be well.]

(Seita's rei looks on as his past self returns to Nishinomiya via train, carrying the ashes of his mother. Seita and Setsuko's rei get off at a station and they walk down a hill. It is night and they see Seita opening the gate to his aunt's home. Seita hesitates, and before opening the door, he hides the wooden box of his mother's ashes. [Note: Sadly, since it was a mass cremation, the ashes that Seita obtained are not, strictly speaking, "his mother's ashes". Rather, they are what may or may not contain some of her ashes.]

SETSUKO: Mommy! Where's Mommy? Is Mommy still not well?

SEITA: No. She got hurt in the raid.

AUNT: Welcome back. How was your mother? Is she in the Kaisei Hospital?

SETNA: Uh... yes...

AUNT: Marines are lucky. They get to use trucks for transport in their pre-evacuation. ["Sokai" = pre-evacuation of items or persons to rural areas by those living in more metropolitan areas] Your spare futons are out in the room.

SEITA: Thank you. ["Sumimasen" LT: Sorry]

SETSUKO: I wonder if Mommy doesn't need it anymore. Did she give it to me?

SEITA: That's important, so put it away. Mom is... When Mom gets a little better, let's go pay her a visit, okay? [ALT: Let's go see her, okay?]

SETSUKO: Okay.

SEITA: It's late, so sleep now. [ALT: So, go to sleep now.]

SETSUKO: Okay.

(Late that night, Seita sneaks out of the house to retrieve the urn.

(The next day finds Seita going back to what is left of his house to retrieve what he hid in the backyard. On his way back to his aunt's house, he drinks a water from a broken water pipe. He tosses the treasure he found, the candy can, into the back of the cart. He opens a jar of umeboshi [= pickled plums; extremely acidic and sour, but good] and suffers the consequences.)

AUNT: herring, dried fish flakes, dried sweet potatoes, eggs, and pickled plums. My! Isn't this butter? Even during these hard times, some people have it all. the military people get to live in luxury. [ALT: get to live in excess.] So Seita-san, have you visited the hospital? I want to discuss with your mother about what to do in the future, so I was planning to visit her with Sett-chan. (Noticing Seita's grim face,) She didn't make it?

SEITA: Mom died at the school.

AUNT: What? She died? If that was the case, why didn't you tell me sooner? You're an unfrank child! ["Mizukusai" = not being frank out of reservation or from politeness]

SEITA: I didn't want Setsuko to know.

AUNT: So she died... My goodness. You must write to your father immediately and let him know.

SETSUKO: Nii-chan! Sister bought me a new sandals!

SEITA: That's good, Setsuko. [ALT: Aren't you lucky, Setsuko.]

GIRL: Welcome back.

(Seita and Setsuko are playing in a bath tub at their neighbor's house. They come out refreshed and amused.)

[Note: In those days, especially in the rural areas, not everyone had bathing facilities. Neighbors borrowed from those who did have them.]

VOICE: Rough time for you kids...

SEITA: Thank you very much.

SETSUKO: What's that sound?

SEITA: That's the edible frog. There's nothing to fear.

SETSUKO: Ah! A firefly!

SEITA: (Seita catches one.) Here, take this. [ALT: catch it.] (Setsuko accidentally crushes the firefly.) Oh, you crushed it!

SETSUKO: What is this smell? SEITA It's because you squished it!

(They arrive at a field where there are plenty of fireflies both in and out the air.)

SEITA: My, there're so many of them; the fireflies. Oh yes. Setsuko, close your eyes and say "Ahhhn".

SETSUKO: Why?

SEITA: It doesn't matter why. Just say "Ahhhn".

SETSUKO: Ahhhn.

(Seita pops in one of the drop candies into Setsuko's mouth.)

SETSUKO: A drop! Mmmmm! Drop, drop, drop! [ET: candy; "Dorop" which comes from drop candy is synonymous to "Ame" = candy, in Japanese.]

(She runs around but suddenly comes to a halt.)

SETSUKO: I almost swallowed it.

(Seita and Setsuko returns. Their aunt is scraping the bottom of a pot to get the burnt scraps.)

SEITA: We're back.

AUNT: That was long. [ALT: You're back late.] Did you thank the lady? [Note: In Japanese, "Oba-san" is not only "aunt" but is also used in reference to any middle aged woman.]

SEITA: Yes.

(As the kids retire to their room, Seita peers back at the kitchen and swallows.)

SEITA: That looked good...

(\_Rainy day\_)

AUNT: Seita-san. What happened to school? Don't you need to go? [ALT: Shouldn't you attend?]

SEITA: Well, the academy I used to go is a mess from the bombings, and the school burned, so there's nothing I can do.

AUNT: Really? [ALT: Is that so?] You did write that letter to your father, ?

SEITA: I did . As a certified mail.

AUNT: When?

SEITA: It was as soon as I got here, so it's been more than 10 days.

AUNT: That's strange. I haven't received any reply yet. (As she leaves the room,) If you use the scissors you must put them away, Sett-chan.

(Somedays later, at dinner:)

AUNT: How goes the war?

BOY: It's getting worse, I heard. Other factories have to cover the load for those others burned in the air-raid. All they keep saying is for us to pour all efforts into increasing the production in preparation for the battle on the mainland. [ALT: They tell us to pour all efforts into increasing the production in preparation for the final battle.]

AUNT: That must be so... Even the distribution of food items are getting worse and worse. [ALT: Food rations are getting sparser as well.] It's becoming tough for everyone, and not just for the soldiers on the battle field. Koi-san is also part of the country's work force; you must eat alot and gain strength as well. [ALT: keep up your energy/strength] ["Koi-san" = Youngest sister in rural 'Kansai' tongue] (The siren starts.)

AUNT: Again!

( \_In the shelter\_ )

WOMEN: So at your place, two got burned out? That must be hard. They're so young. Pity.

SEITA: What's the matter? Your rash itches?

SETSUKO: I'm hot! I hate shelters!

SEITA: Bear it. Nii-chan's here, so you're not afraid, are you? [ALT: I'm here, so you're not afraid, are you?]

(Some days later:)

SEITA: Wanna go to the sea?

SETSUKO: Yes, let's go. Let's go to the sea! (On their way to the sea,)

SEITA: My... They've turned everything into fields...

( \_At the sea\_ )

SETSUKO: What are they doing?

SEITA: They're taking the salt water. The rationed salts and soy sauces aren't enough. Let's go. Hurry and get undressed.

SETSUKO: Ohhh!

SEITA: It might be a little cold.

SETSUKO: Noo! [ALT: Do--n't!] It's co--ld!

SEITA: Doesn't it feel good around the rash?

SETSUKO: Yes! It's a large bath tub!

SEITA: Hey! (Starts chasing Setsuko) Stop! [ALT: Wait] I'll eat you up!

(Seita starts to playfully chase after Setsuko. As they rest, Setsuko comes across a crab and follows it. She comes across a body hidden under a mat.)

SETSUKO: What's the matter? [ALT: What's he doing?] He's lying down.

SEITA: You don't have to see that. When it gets a little warmer, we can swim; I'll teach you how.

SETSUKO: If you swim, you'll grow hungry! [ALT: If we swim, we'll grow hungry]

VOICE "If you swim, you'll grow hungry!" [ALT: \*as above\*]

MOTHER: Seita-san, Sett-chan. Come over here. You must be hungry. The carupisu is chilled, too. [Carupisu = a sweet milk-based drink]

(With the roar of the siren, Seita comes out from day-dreaming. They head back home.)

GIRL: Oh, Mother! Were you safe? It's great you came.

WOMAN: How are you?

GIRL: I'm fine. Everybody cared for me.

(The girl and the woman continue their discussion in the backdrop.)

SETSUKO: I'm hungry.

SEITA: Bear it. Hurry, or else the raid's gonna come here soon.

SETSUKO: I'm tired. Nii-chan, piggy-back! (Seita sighs.)

VOICE: Take shelter!

( \_At the aunt's home\_ )

AUNT: About your mother's kimono... I hate to say it, but since there's no more use for them, why don't you exchange them for rice? I myself have been bartering [= "item-item exchange"] a little at a time for some time to supplement . I think this would be about one- toh . ["toh" = about 16 qt.]

SEITA: One toh?!

AUNT You must get more nourishments. You're going to grow strong and be a soldier, right?

SEITA: This would be one toh ?

AUNT: I'm sure your mother would be pleased about it, rather than have these just lie about. Well, I'll be going.

SETSUKO: You can't.

AUNT: Why, Sett-chan, you were awake?

SETSUKO: It's Mom's . You can't! It's Mom's. You can't, you can't!

SEITA: Setsuko!

SETSUKO: No, no, no! No, no, no!

(Seita's rei covers his ears, not wanting to hear Setsuko's tormenting cry. The kimono their aunt took for item exchange was a formal kimono their mother wore. The fall of the cherry-blossom petals changes to the fall of white rice into a container.)

AUNT: Isn't it a good rice? I'll be cooking this white rice for dinner, Sett-chan. (tightens lid) Here, you two hold on to this.

SEITA: It's white rice, Setsuko! [ET: A white meal, Setsuko!]

(Seita pokes Setsuko. Setsuko begins to cry, but at dinner...)

AUNT: There you go. It's a pity that both Koi-san and Nii-san are working over-time and won't be able to eat this warm meal.

SEITA: The white rice is sure delicious, isn't it?

SETSUKO: (Nods.) Seconds!

AUNT: Yes, yes. Sett-chan, you have an appetite when it's white rice, don't you?

SETSUKO: Yes! I like it!

( \_Next day, breakfast\_ )

SEITA: What's the matter?

SETSUKO: I don't like zo<sup>^</sup> sui. ["zo<sup>^</sup> sui"=watered barley/rice meal]

SEITA: The pickled plums that I brought... There're no more?

AUNT: That thing... You know that it ran out a long time ago. (To her son:) Here, your lunch.

BOY: Thanks. [LT: Then, I'll be taking it.]

AUNT: Gokuroh-sama [LT: Thanks for the labor/toil; ALT: Have a good day.]

GIRL: Well, I'll be going!

AUNT: Take care!

SEITA: Look. Lunch will be white rice, so bear it and eat it.

AUNT: Cut it out! For those that are here during the day, lunch will also be zohsui! Why should the lunch for those that work for the country and those that just sit around all day be the same? Seita-san. You're old enough; start thinking about how you can be of help. You two don't give us any rice but expect to eat it. It just doesn't go that way. No way. You let them eat white rice for a while and my, they become so picky about taste. [ALT: picky about food]

SETSUKO: But that rice is our rice... [ALT: But it's our rice.]

AUNT: What was that? Are you saying that I'm cheating you, then? What a thing to say! What's the use of taking in two orphans, if they say such things to me? [ALT: Why should I bother to take in two orphans, if they...] Fine! Let's cook separate meals from now on. You won't have any complaint, then. And Seita-san. You do have other relatives in Tokyo, don't you? There's that someone from your mother's family. Why don't you send out a letter? Nishinomiya [ALT: This place] might be bombed any day .

(On a train,)

SEITA: But I don't know their addresses...

(In front of a bank,)

GIRL: Let's go home!

WOMAN: Yes. Dad's waiting at home, isn't he?

BOTH: The frogs are croaking, so let's go home...

[NOTED EARLIER: The reason for frog in this song: "Kaeru" = frog; "kaeru"= to go home/back; "kaero<sup>^</sup>" = let's go home/back]

SEITA: Sorry! [LT: Forgive me!] I had to wait a long time. What's the matter?

SETSUKO: I'm hungry. I'm thirsty.

SEITA: All right. [ ALT: Understood] Here. Lick these drops. Mom had seven thousand yen saved in the bank. Seven thousand yen! If there's that much, we can manage plenty. There's no need to worry anymore.

( \_At a post office\_ )

SEITA: I'm writing to Dad, saying "Give us a reply, Setsuko's waiting."

( \_At a store\_ )

OWNER: You guys are lucky. In times like these, no matter how much money you offer, you can't buy these items. Nowadays, there're no items to sell and the business is dry. Especially metal products. Can't find them anywhere.

SEITA: I'll take that comb, and... do you have any umbrellas?

OWNER: I don't have umbrellas... Oh yes.

( \_Outside, in the rain\_ )

SEITA: (Song to the effect of) "Rain, rain, fall, fall, Nii-chan has come with an umbrella. Pitt-chi Pitt-chi Chap-pu Chap-pu [the sounds of rain close to "splatter splatter droppity drop"] Lan Lan Lan!"

(Home. Seita is making a fire.)

SEITA: Isn't Nii-chan good with this?

SETSUKO: Yup.

AUNT: Careful with the fire.

SEITA: Okay.

BOY: What happened to those two?

AUNT: They say they're going to cook for themselves from now on.

BOY: Really... That's admirable. second, please.

GIRL: Mother, didn't you say something harsh again?

AUNT: Well, but, not a single word of apology and they went and bought all those utensils. It's as if they're insinuating something!

(In a different room,)

SEITA: I'm filled! [ALT: I'm full!] ["Gosso-san" = short for "Gochiso^ sama"; said after meals to indicate gratefulness or contentment with the meal]

SETSUKO: [?: That's not proper, Nii-chan.]

SEITA: It's okay. You don't have to sit so properly.

(At the rationing station,)

MAN: There. That's the rationed portion for two.

SEITA: Only this much?

MAN: Yup. The next ration will probably be in July.

(Setsuko is crying in the street, expressing her hunger. Her crying ceases temporarily when Seita hands over the candy can, but resumes when she finds no candy drops. Seita hits the can and several candy pieces that were stuck to the bottom of the can are found. Setsuko looks at what she has left, and after some thought, eats the smallest and puts the rest back into the can. Seita gives the can to Setsuko for her to keep.)

(Having no more candies left, the two fill the empty can with water. Seita begins to shake it, but gives it over to Setsuko who is eager to do it herself. Seita pours the candy-water into a small cup and hands it to Setsuko to drink.)

SEITA: sweet?

SETSUKO: Ahhh! There're lots of flavors!

SEITA: Grapes, strawberries, melons, mints. They're all in there, aren't they? Setsuko, you can drink 'em all.

SETSUKO: Whew! I drank 'em all!

( \_At the kitchen, another day\_ )

AUNT: My, my! They went to sleep without cleaning up ! They do as they like. They really aren't cute at all! [ALT: They're not likable at all!]

(Setsuko starts crying in another room.)

AUNT: Again!!

(Aunt opens the sho<sup>^</sup>ji door.)

SETSUKO: Mommy! Mommy!

AUNT: Seita-san! Koi-san [= younger sister] and Nii-san [= older brother] are both working for our country, so why don't you at least try not to make her cry? [ALT: so why don't you at least make an effort to stop her crying?] We're already losing sleep from the sirens every night. We can't sleep with this racket!

SETSUKO: Mommy! Mommy!

(Seita takes Setsuko outside, and having her on piggy-back, tries to lull her to sleep. Suddenly, the raid-sirens sound and he runs for shelter.)

VOICE: Emergency war status, emergency war status. The enemy is approaching from the northern direction...

AUNT'S VC: Seita-san, you're going to the shelter-hole, again? ["yoko ana" = LT: Side Hole; A hole dug into the side of a mountain for air-raid shelter] At your age, shouldn't you be [ALT: isn't it natural for you to be] helping the fire-prevention program of the community group?

(Seita comes to the shelter-hole. As they wait out the raid in the shelter,)

SETSUKO: I want to go home. I don't want to stay at aunt's anymore.

SEITA: The house got burnt. We can't go home anymore.

( \_Flashback -- Seita and Setsuko are playing the organ\_ )

BOTH: (Singing:) Higher than the roof, the Koi-Nobori. The large koi is the father and... [NOTE: Koi-Nobori = a colorful cone-like flag in the shape of carps that is displayed outside on the national holiday, Children's Day]

AUNT: Stop it! What a thing to do in time of war? I'm the one who will be scorned! How senseless! [ALT: How irrational!] Really, what burden have been tossed my way! [LT: Really, what god-of misfortune has wandered in!] Even during the air-raid, you're never of any use... If you value your life that much, you should live in the shelter-hole!

(Recalling,)

SEITA: Hey... Do you want to make this our home? No one would come here and the structure is solid. We can do as we please.

SETSUKO: Is it okay to make it our home?

SEITA: Yup. [ALT would be a broken "yes": yeah, n-hmph, ah-huh]

(Seita is packing their stuff onto a cart. Setsuko notices the Aunt coming.)

SEITA: We've overstayed our welcome. [LT: We've interrupted you for a very long time.] We'll be moving elsewhere.

AUNT: elsewhere? where are you going?

SEITA: I don't know for certain, yet.

AUNT: Well, be careful... Sett-chan, goodbye.

(They come to the cave. Setsuko is thoroughly enjoying herself.)

SETSUKO: Here's the kitchen! Here's the front door! Where's the toilet?

SEITA: It doesn't matter where. I'll be going with you. (At the farm, Seita is returning the cart.)

SEITA: Thank you.

MAN: Just leave it around there.

SEITA: Ahm... Can you sell me a little more hay and something that can be a side-dish? [ALT: part of dinner]

MAN: Sure... I only have what I have though... (They cook. As they look at the fruit of their labor...)

SETSUKO: Wow! My mouth is watering!

SEITA: I'm hungry!

(They finish eating. They hear the bellow of a frog.)

SEITA: If it could be caught, we can eat that ... [ALT: It's supposed to be edible if we only could catch it]

SETSUKO: The frog?

SEITA: I heard it's good.

SETSUKO: (Makes a noise in her throat indicating amazed acceptance.)

SEITA: Setsuko, forget the rest and get inside the net. [ALT: I'll do the rest so get inside the net.]

(\_Nightfall\_)

SEITA: What's the matter?

SETSUKO: I forgot my toothbrush.

SEITA: It doesn't matter if you don't do it for a day.

SEITA: Hey, you'll be bitten by the mosquitos. You should be in the net.

SETSUKO: It's so dark, I'm scared. [ALT: It's all dark and I'm scared.]

SEITA: I'm going to go to the bathroom, but do you want to go too?

SETSUKO: Yes.

(\_Outside, finishing their business\_)

SEITA: That's the "special attack" unit. [ALT: suicide unit. Men in the "Tokkoh-tai" never returned alive.]

SETSUKO: Really? They look like fireflies.

SEITA: I guess so. Hey... Do you want to capture fireflies?

(Seita comes into the net holding several fireflies. He releases them.)

SETSUKO: Ah! I see your face.

SEITA: Your face, too. (A firefly lands on Setsuko's hair.) A hair ornament!

(Setsuko is delighted.)

SEITA: All right! Firefly's light, window's snow! [Note: Part of a poem/song describing the changing season]

(Seita brings in a whole bucketful. The fireflies slowly emerge and the inside of the net is soon filled with small points of stars.)

SEITA: Before you were born, I once saw a ship-naming ceremony [?: ship-opening?? "kankai ceremony"].

SETSUKO: A ship-naming ceremony?

SEITA: Yup. Dad got on board the front of the ship [?]. The combined fleets were all there.

(Seita starts to sing the then-military anthem.)

SEITA: Enemy ships attacking! Bababababa! Babababa! [Noise associated with firing machine guns] (pause) I wonder where Dad's fighting the war...

(Suddenly feeling lonely, Seita hugs Setsuko to him.)

SETSUKO: You're suffocating me, Nii-chan!

(The next morning finds Setsuko digging a hole.)

SEITA: What are you doing?

SETSUKO: I'm making a grave. Mommy's in a grave, too, right? I heard it from Aunty. < Aunty said > Mommy died, too, and she's in a grave.

(Hearing this, Seita begins to cry for the first time since the tragedy befell him and his sister.)

SEITA: (wiping his tears,) Let's someday visit her grave. Maybe you remember... [LT: Setsuko, do you remember?] You've been to the graveyard near the Inofuki [?], right? She's there... Mother is... under the big camphor tree...

SETSUKO: Why do the fireflies die so quickly?

(Kids from nearby find the conditions Seita and Setsuko are living under.)

BOY1: What's this? Someone's living in a place like this.

BOY2: I wonder if they were burned out ?

BOY: Do you think a scary-looking man might come out?

BOY: When have they...? It's a swing!

BOY: There's a grave! [?]

BOY: What's this?

BOY: May you rest in peace! (picking up a make-believe sweet-rice cake) If only this was real!!

BOY: (Pointing to the grass bed that Setsuko made,) Setsuko! It says Setsuko!

BOY: Look at this! It's a dried frog!

BOY: What a thing to eat! [ALT: What are they eating!] I wonder if Tatt-chan and Ken-chan who escaped to rural areas are eating something like this, as well?

BOY: Ughh! All soybeans! It's worse than our rice-soup!

BOY: A ghost! (They laughingly run away).

(\_Seita at one of the farms\_)

SEITA: And... we've traded all of Mom's kimono for rice and don't have anymore. From your place, we've purchased many things with money before...

MAN: I'm not talking about kimono or money. Though we're a farm, we don't make enough to distribute it to others all the time. (pause) Never mind that; don't you have other kin? [ET: relatives]

SEITA: Well... I can't get in touch with them.

MAN: Then, it's better for you to go back to that house. Besides, everything's rationed now. If you're not part of a community group, you can't eat. Apologize and ask them to let you stay.

SEITA: (pause) Sorry . I'll try other places.

MAN: You're the son of a marine, aren't you? Don't lose heart. [ALT: You got to be strong.]

(Air raid. Seita and Setsuko take cover in a tomato garden. Finding the tomatoes all ripe, Seita, unable to resist, takes some for himself and Setsuko--a grave crime in times of war.)

SETSUKO: Is it okay? [ALT: Is it right?]

SEITA: (makes a noise in his throat indicating "yes, yes")

(Walking back to their shelter, they meet a military officer. Fearing discovery of the crime they committed, they run away.)

SEITA: Damn! [LT: No good!]

(Seita is combing Setsuko's hair. Finding lice, he angrily kills one.)

SEITA: Whether it's soy-bean or whatever, you mustn't be picky. If you don't eat well, you won't be able to grow up!

SETSUKO: Nii-chan? [ET: Brother?]

SEITA: Yes?

SETSUKO: I... I have a bad stomach. [ALT: My stomach is feeling funny.]

SEITA: Did you chill your stomach? [ALT: Did you leave your stomach exposed while sleeping?]

SETSUKO: I've been having diarrhea for a long time now.

(Seita is found stealing from a farm.)

MAN: You bastard!!

SEITA: Forgive me! I'm sorry. Please forgive me! My sister's ill, so I wanted to let her drink potato broth!

MAN: What nonsense do you speak of? Stealing from a farm during times of war is a grave crime! (Seita tries to get away, but is captured again.)

MAN: You little bastard. Come on. Stand up! (he flashes his light at Seita) What's this? You pulled up even the small potatoes. You must have been the one who has been stealing from the farms around here!

SETSUKO: Nii-chan!

SEITA: I'm sorry! I won't do it again!

MAN: If sorry is all it took, we wouldn't need police! Walk, why don't you!

SETSUKO: Nii-chan! Nii-chan!

SEITA: My sister's really sick! I gotta be with her...!

SETSUKO: Nii-chan! Nii-chan!

(At the local station,)

POLICE: I understand what happened . Regarding this case, I'll consider the best solution after I talk to the offender and prepare a report, so you may leave.

MAN: But...!

POLICE: You've hit him this much, you must be satisfied. (Seeing the man is still reluctant to leave,) Violence against a minor, causing injury [ALT: bodily harm].

MAN: (panicking,) Then, I'll ask you to take care of the rest! [ALT: Then, I trust you'll take care of the rest.]

POLICE: I heard that today's air-raid was unexpected. Well, why don't you take a drink of water from the back?

(Seita comes out from the station after some time.)

SEITA: Setsuko...!

SETSUKO: Nii-chan!

(Seita begins to cry.)

SETSUKO: Nii-chan... (pause) Where does it hurt? That's not good. We'll have to call the doctor and have him give you a shot.

SEITA: Setsuko...!

SETSUKO: Nii-chan, I want to go to the bathroom.

SEITA: Can you hold it for a little distance?

SETSUKO: Yes.

SEITA: Get on my back.

(Air-raid. Setsuko awaits Seita's return but seems delirious.)

SETSUKO: Brother went to the mountain for firewood. Grandmother went to...

[Note: This is the famous beginning sentences to the children's story "Momotaro". She changed the phrases from "Grandfather went to the mountain for firewood. Grandmother went to the river to wash clothes".]

(Seita, meanwhile, rummages through the home of those who fled. Coming back with his booty--food and other items--he presents them to Setsuko.)

SEITA: Setsuko, let's have supper. Today's pumpkin is really tasty! Look. Isn't it like a bean jelly?

SETSUKO: I don't like bean jelly.

SEITA: What are you saying? If you don't eat, I'll be scolded by Dad! Here, I'll help you eat, so get your spirits up and eat! Eat well, get well quickly, and we'll go to the sea again together!

(Sirens sound. While the people flee, Seita plunders through homes.)

SEITA: Do it, do it! Yeahy! [ALT: Go, go! Yeahy!]

(Seita returns from the rampage well stocked. He drinks from the river. He points his flashlight and says "Bang", then laughs.)

SEITA: This time I'll really treat you to something good to eat, Setsuko!

SETSUKO: (Wandering around the shelter-hole,) Nii-chan. Nii-chan...

(At a farm house, Seita is trying to barter his plunders for food.)

WOMAN: You say this is your mother's keep-sake? Fool! Why would something so cheap and thin be a keep-sake? Don't fool with me! [ALT: Get real!]

(Seita returns to the shelter-hole and finds Setsuko's doll.)

SEITA: Setsuko... Setsuko...! (He finds her collapsed nearby.)

SEITA: Setsuko! (Finding that she still breathes, he sighs.)

SETSUKO: Nii-chan... water...

(\_Doctor's office\_)

DOCTOR: Breathe in. Breathe out.

SEITA: And her diarrhea hasn't stopped for several days now. Her rashes don't seem to be heat-rashes either... When I wash her with salt water, all it does is give her pain.

DOCTOR: It's a prostration due to malnutrition. Her diarrhea is the result of that. Okay, next person!

SEITA: Some medicine or shots...?

SETSUKO: I don't like shots.

SEITA: Anyhow, please give her treatment of some kind. Please.

DOCTOR: medicine or anything... Well, I suggest that she get some nourishment. That's all that can be done.

SEITA: You say nourishment, but...

DOCTOR: (To the next patient,) What seems to be the matter?

SEITA: Where can you find nourishment?!!

(A farmer is cutting ice block for delivery. Seita, standing by, picks the ice scraps and feeds them to Setsuko after the man leaves.)

SEITA: I'm so hungry... [ALT: I'm so starved...] What do you want to eat?

SETSUKO: Tempura, and Otsukuri, and Tokoro-ten... [ET: Tempura, and Sashimi, and Sour Jelly]

SEITA: Anything more?

SETSUKO: Ice cream... And I want to eat drops again. [Note: During the war, food items were rare and the variety scarce. The fact that she knows about them and expresses that she wants to eat them indicates that she has eaten them regularly and shows how well-off her family actually was.]

SEITA: Drops, huh? Alright! I'll go withdraw all the savings. I'll bring back all that you wanted to eat.

SETSUKO: I don't want anything. Just stay here, Nii-chan. Don't go. Don't go. Please don't go.

SEITA: Don't worry, Setsuko. [ALT: There's no need to worry, Setsuko] After I withdraw the money and buy rice and things with nutrients, I won't go anywhere anymore. I'll stay by your side for ever and ever. [ALT: for always] It's a promise.

(\_At the bank\_)

TELLER: Here, 3000 yen.

MAN1: I hear the typhoon's nearing?

MAN2: No matter how much the Kami-kaze [ET: God-Wind] blows, if it comes after we surrendered to the Americans, it's of no use whatsoever. How ridiculous!

SEITA: Surrender? You mean we lost the war?

MAN1: You don't know anything?

SEITA: Is it true that we lost? Japan? The Japanese Empire?! [ALT: The Imperial Japan?]

MAN2: Yup. Unconditional surrender.

SEITA: What happened to the combined fleet...

MAN2: No good, no good. That got sunk long time ago and there's not one left anymore.

SEITA: What!? You mean Dad's cruiser got sunk as well?! Is that why we never got any letter back?!

MAN2: Why should I know !? [ALT: How should I know?] What a strange kid!

SEITA: Dad, you fool! [grrrrr: doesn't translate well. It's like "Damn you, Dad", but not that strong]

(He runs, but hunger slows him.)

SEITA: I'm so hungry... (pause) Dad...

SEITA: Dad died, too. Dad died, too. Dad...!

(Seita returns.)

SEITA: Setsuko, I'm sorry I'm late. I'll cook you a white rice porridge.

SETSUKO: It went down... It went up... Ah, it stopped...

SEITA: Luckily, I was able to buy fish and eggs. And... (notices that Setsuko has something in her mouth. Picking up the drop can,) Setsuko! What are you licking! These are marble pieces. it's not drops! Today, I've gotten something much better. It's something you like.

SETSUKO: Here you go, Nii-chan...

SEITA: What's this, Setsuko?

SETSUKO: It's a meal. I'll give you the the cooked okara. [Note: "Okara" is soybean milk crust that is a by-product of making tofu.]

SETSUKO: Go ahead, eat. Aren't you going to eat?

SEITA: Setsuko...! Look, watermelon. Isn't it great? I didn't steal it. Here, watermelon.

SETSUKO: It's delicious...

SEITA: Wait a moment. I'll cook you a rice-porridge with eggs immediately. I'll leave the watermelon here. Okay?

SETSUKO: Nii-chan... Thank you...

R/ SEITA: After that, Setsuko never opened her eyes again.

( \_At the coal shop\_ )

MAN: Here. The one sack of coal, special delivery. [ALT: one bale] If it's a child, you should borrow the burning ground from the temple. You take her clothes off and if you light the fire with soybean skin, it'll burn nicely. But... what nice weather!

[Note: Do not think this man to be insensitive. Everyone has been desensitized to some degree during the war. It is truly sad that a child's death is nothing new or anything sensational.]

(People are returning to their homes from rural districts they had fled to. Two such girls enter their long deserted home.)

GIRLS: My, it hasn't changed at all! Home is definitely great! [ALT: There's no place like home!] It's been a while; the record player!! Familiar sights!

(Song: "There's No Place Like Home". Visions of Setsuko in all the places she had been near the shelter-hole that was their home.)

SETSUKO: Hurry home!

(At an open field, Seita is preparing Setsuko's cremation. Setsuko is placed in the empty container the coal came in. Her few "treasures" are placed lovingly along side of her. Seita pauses on the drop can, and sets it aside. He lights the fire and grimly watches the cremation. Morning turns to day, and day turns to evening. With the last remaining flames, the fireflies take flight from their resting spots among the field...)

R/ SEITA: The following morning, I placed the remnants of Setuko's bones that were like a fragment of a jewel into the drop can and left the mountain, never returning to the shelter-hole.

(Seita's figure is slowly replaced by Seita's rei. From the darkness, Setsuko's rei appears and runs to Seita.)

R/ SETSUKO: Nii-chan...

R/ SEITA: It's late, so sleep now. [ALT: It's late, so go to sleep now.]

R/ SETSUKO: Okay. (She snuggles close and closes her eyes.)

(The rei of Seita watches over Setsuko; then, as if to beseech to the audience, he stares out towards the viewers. He returns his attention to the sleeping form of Setsuko...)

THE END